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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
U. S. Agricultural Marketing Service
Washington 25, D. C.

KNOW THE EGGS YOU BUY

Announcer - Today, we are going to have some background material on KNOWING THE EGGS YOU BUY, from two people who are familiar with the United States Department of Agriculture egg grading program. Our guests today are Mrs. _____, _____ (Title) _____, and Mr. _____, Marketing Specialist, both from the Agricultural Marketing Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, and they will give us some pointers on what the size and grade designations on the officially labeled egg carton mean, and how we can judge the quality of the eggs we use in our kitchens. Let's take size first (shows egg carton with label). This label says, "Large". Exactly how large is "Large"?

Mrs. _____ Large eggs must average a minimum of $2\frac{1}{4}$ ounces, or 1-1/2 pounds, to the dozen. This is a large egg (shows egg). Other common sizes found in retail stores are Medium, 21 ounces to the dozen; Extra Large, 27 ounces to the dozen; and Small, 18 ounces to the dozen (shows real egg of appropriate size as each is mentioned, and arranges them in order in labeled egg holder). It pays to take weight into consideration when you're buying eggs, because sometimes you actually get more egg for your money in a dozen Medium or Small eggs when prices for these

smaller sizes are low. So when you know how much a dozen of each size of eggs weighs, you can figure out whether Extra Large at one price, or Large at another price, or Medium or Small at still other prices are more economical.

Announcer - How are eggs weighed? Or rather - when are they weighed?
After packing?

Mr. _____ No. Eggs are sorted into proper weight classes or sizes before packing. This is done by an automatic weighing machine, or by hand, at the time the eggs are candled. Here is an egg scale (or picture) used to check the accuracy of the weight classing. Of course, consumers don't see this scale in use because eggs are weighed and packed before they get to the retailer. This Large egg should make the pointer move to the 24-ounce mark (weighs egg), showing that a dozen eggs of this size weighs 24 ounces. This egg is a Medium (weighs), or 21 ounces to the dozen.

Announcer - Now, about Grade - I understand that grade means something different from size - that is, a Large egg is not necessarily a Grade A egg. Then there must be Large Grade B eggs - and Medium and Small Grade A eggs?

Mr. _____ That's right. Here are some illustrations of grade marks (may be attached to egg cartons) that show several different combinations of grade and weight (shows labels, "Grade A, Medium" - "Grade B, Large" - etc.)

Announcer - Then what does Grade indicate if it hasn't anything to do with weight?

Mr. _____ Grade shows the interior quality of the egg at the time it was packed. The grades for eggs sold at retail range from AA, highest quality, to C, lowest quality. Grades AA, A, and B are most often found in stores.

Announcer - You know, I've seen pictures of candling lights, but I never have seen one used.

Mr. _____ Well, candling lights are used before the eggs are packed, too, so the consumer seldom sees one. In candling eggs the less the operator can see inside the egg the higher the quality of the egg. A distinct dark off-centered yolk shadow indicates a thin white and low quality. (Demonstrate candling light .. if possible.)

Announcer - Let's get on to eggs in the kitchen. We have some large pictures of eggs broken out of the shell,
How would you describe the qualities of these eggs, Mr.

-----?

Mr. _____ The AA has a high thick white and a firm high yolk (puts labeled picture of AA egg on flannelgraph). The A has a white and yolk that are not quite as high (attaches picture of A egg). Grade B shows a thinner white and flattened yolk, and Grade C has a white that is thin and a yolk that is quite spread out and apt to break.

Announcer - Does the quality show up this same way after the eggs are cooked?

Mr. _____ Yes: Mrs. _____ has brought some cooked eggs that show quality characteristics very well.

Mrs. _____ (Sets out poached, fried, and hard-cooked eggs; indicates grade of each, described quality characteristics of each as it is put out. Expect to show AA and A in fried and poached, lower grade, if available, in hard-cooked, to show off-centered yolk, if possible.) AA and A grade eggs are ordinarily recommended for poaching or frying where shape shows up so definitely; but Grade B and Grade C are good eggs also, and they are perfectly satisfactory for scrambling, for mixed dishes, and for custards.

Announcer - Is grade related only to thickness of white and yolk:

Mrs. _____ No. Grade AA and A have been found to have more delicate flavor than eggs of the lower grades. That's another reason for using high quality eggs for poaching and frying.

Announcer - And I hear that it's easier to keep quality high when eggs are kept in the refrigerator.

Mr. _____ Yes, that's true. Quality is retained much better at temperatures of 50° or lower than it is at higher temperatures. As holding temperatures go up, quality goes down.

Mrs. _____ And that brings up two other points I want to tell our audience. First, buy eggs from a dealer who keeps his stock of eggs

refrigerated. The grade mark can't mean as much as it should if eggs are not kept cold in the store before you buy them. Second, keep eggs cold at home, too.

Announcer - No leaving the egg container out of the refrigerator until after breakfast!

Mrs. - - - - - Absolutely not. Take out only as many eggs as you need, and put the rest back at once to keep cold.

Announcer - Now, let's go back over some of these points. These large pictures tell most of the story. (Panels of chart "Know the Eggs You Buy" attached one at a time to flannelgraph)

Mrs. - - - - - (Panel 1) Cartons of officially labeled eggs show the size --- Grade --- the packer --- and the date of packing. So read the label and know what you're buying. --- (Panel 2) Consider the weight of the eggs in the carton - Extra Large at 27 ounces, Large at 24 ounces, Medium at 21 ounces, or Small at 18 ounces - so you will know if you are getting the largest quantity of egg for your money.

Announcer - What are those "Jumbo" and "Peewee" eggs? You didn't mention them before.

Mrs. - - - - - They aren't sold in most markets, although when pullets are producing, "Peewee" eggs are sometimes available.

Announcer - They ought to be just the right size for children's servings!

Mrs. _____ Yes, that's an excellent suggestion. --- (Panel 3) Consider the quality of the eggs, too. --- For the use you are going to put them to, and the price - of course, lower quality eggs should cost less than the very best.

Announcer - I think they'll show up better in these next pictures.

Mrs. _____ (Panel 4) Here you see the different qualities of eggs as they look when fried and poached. See how high and firm the white of the AA egg is - and how neat the shape is. In Grade A, the white and yolk are not quite so high. Then, you see, the whites of the Grade B and Grade C are much more flat and spread out.

Announcer - (Panel 5) And this one last point. --- After you have bought your eggs, protect the quality --- keep them in the refrigerator. -- Can homemakers get pictures like these to use at home?

Mrs. _____ Yes, we have color charts called "KNOW THE EGGS YOU BUY". The number is PA-70. Then there is a bulletin that shows more pictures and tells more about the grading program. The bulletin is called "EGG BUYING GUIDES FOR CONSUMERS". The bulletin is G-26. You can get either one by writing to the Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.* (Show address on card.)

*Or, requests can be sent to the station and relayed to the local poultry office.

(Special suggestions -

In preparing the cooked eggs for demonstration best results are obtained by cooking the fried and poached eggs over a very low heat -- about 10 minutes each. The prepared eggs should be cooked firm throughout for best handling. Fried and poached eggs may be prepared as much as a day or two in advance if cooked and held properly. To hold fried eggs safely, immerse them in cooking oil. Drain well immediately before using in demonstration to avoid oily appearance. Poached eggs should be immersed in cold water.

If showing good centering of yolk in top quality hard-cooked eggs, keep turning eggs as they are cooked.

Plastic film may be used to cover cut surfaces of hard cooked eggs until used.

Quality differences in eggs will not show satisfactorily except in close-up shots.)

Remember all cooked eggs should be kept under refrigeration.

* * * * *

January 1955

EXAMPLES OF SHELL EGG GRADE MARKS



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